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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

MONDAY, June 12, 1933.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Acid-forming and Alkaline-forming Foods." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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If you start thinking over the good reasons for eating plenty of vegetables and fruits this season, you'll find a lot of them. First, you can get fruits and vegetables fresh from the garden. That means the finest flavor and fresh texture and color. Second, these foods are plentiful and inexpensive during the growing season. Third, vegetables and fruits are our best source of those minerals and vitamins needed to balance the carbohydrates, proteins, and fats in the bread, cereals and meats that make up the main part of the usual bill of fare. Still another important reason has to do with acid-forming and alkaline-forming foods. This is important especially in the economy diet, which necessarily contains a high proportion of cereal foods.

Some foods are acid-forming, some are alkaline-forming, some are neutral. The tissues and fluids in the normal body are slightly alkaline and should be kept so. Too much acid-forming food in proportion to the alkaline food we use may upset the normal alkaline condition in the body. Too much alkaline food is a mistake the other way round, but not so common. To maintain the right condition, we need to know which foods are which. Otherwise, we are almost certain to be misled as to acid-forming foods. The fact that a food, like tomatoes or oranges, say, tastes acid doesn't mean that it forms an acid ash in the body. The actual acidity or alkalinity of food before it goes into the body has nothing to do with the case. Acid foods, like tomatoes, oranges and lemons, are not acid-forming. On the contrary, they produce an alkaline reaction in the body. This is true of nearly all the fruits and vegetables. Among the fruits, the exceptions are cranberries, some prunes and some plums. Among the vegetables, the acid forming foods are peanuts and lentils.

Foods that are not acid-forming are either neutral or alkaline-forming. Under normal conditions pure fats, like lard, and pure carbohydrates, like highly refined sugar, are neutral in their reaction. Bread and cereals, meat, fish, poultry and eggs are acid-forming.

Here's the point about a healthful diet. Eat alkaline-forming foods to balance your acid-forming foods, and, at the same time, eat enough kinds of food to furnish the carbohydrates, fats, proteins, minerals and vitamins you need to provide a balanced diet.

That works out more simply than it sound. Milk, vegetables and fruits, which are our main source of minerals and vitamins, are nearly all alkaline in their reaction in the body. On the other hand, the acid-forming foods--bread and cereals,

meats, fish, poultry and eggs--are the main sources of carbohydrates and proteins. For both these reasons, balance the acid-forming foods by milk, vegetables and fruits.

Have you a pencil where you can reach it? Maybe you'd like to make a list for your own reference of these two classes of food. Then, you'll have the facts, if anyone should ask you. First, the alkaline-forming foods. I'll list them alphabetically: Apples ; apricots; bananas; beans the common or kidney beans as well as the beans in pods like snap or string beans and lima beans; beets; cabbage; carrots; cauliflower; chard; chestnuts; cucumbers; grapes; grapefruit, lemons; lettuce; milk; muskmelon; oranges; parsnips; peaches; pears; peas; pineapple; potatoes; radishes; raisins; rutabagas; spinach; sweetpotatoes; tomatoes; turnips; and watermelon. Those are some of the common alkaline-forming foods.

Now for the foods that form acid. I'll list these alphabetically, also. Bread, either white or whole wheat; cheese (Cheddar); sweet corn; corn meal; crackers; cranberries; eggs, both the white and the yolk; fish; lentils; lean meats; oatmeal; peanuts; prunes; plums; rice, entire wheat and white wheat flour.

Now here we are ready for our Monday economy meal. Today let's feature the vegetables and fruits in our meal. Here's the menu: Buttered new beets, and savory greens, or new beets and beet greens; then, Potatoes with cheese sauce, garnished with chopped parsley; Crisp rolls, heated and buttered; Frosted milk to drink; for dessert, Baked bananas with lemon juice. Once more. (Repeat.)

Baked bananas are a quick, easy and low-cost dessert, especially good for the children. Here's the recipe. Five ingredients:

6 ripe bananas
1/2 cup of sugar
2 tablespoons of melted butter or other fat
2 tablespoons of lemon juice, and
1/8 teaspoon of salt -to develop flavor.

I'll repeat that list of five ingredients. (Repeat.)

Select ripe bananas. Skin them and scrape off the stringy fibers. Split the bananas in half, lengthwise. Place them in a greased shallow baking dish. Pour over them the fat, the lemon juice and the bit of salt which have been mixed together. Bake in a moderate oven for twenty to thirty minutes. Serve in the dish they were baked in.

Tomorrow: "Saving Garden Surplus by Home Drying."

